

Jez we can – Brighton rocks for Corbyn and the TUC



JEREMY CORBYN: My plan to build a better railway
FRASER COATS: Milton Friedman's voodoo economics
JO STEVENS: The TU Bill is illiberal and illiterate

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ASLEF at the Trades Union Congress in Brighton

True test of policy is a party in power

ALL decisions that impact on the future of our industry are inherently political, from the debate on the Night Tube, driven by the Mayor of London, to the unpopular franchising of the East Coast by a Tory-led coalition that believed it was going out of power. The shape of our industry is politically driven by spurious direct awards and ITTs that damage the safety of the travelling public by reducing staffing levels to cut costs; and the perverse tax on coal, which has impacted so greatly on our freight members, was a political decision. The iniquitous Trade Union Bill, which criminalises picketing and those seeking a voice against poor employers, who are the root cause of all strife, is also a political decision.

So it is with great pleasure that we congratulate Jeremy Corbyn, Tom Watson and Sadiq Khan in getting the Labour leadership, deputy leadership and London mayoral candidate respectively. As ASLEF nominated all three, we are now being asked for tips for the horses and dogs! The work, of course, starts now. Whilst there is a real need for vocal and vibrant opposition, and to demonstrate, on the doorstep, that those who say 'There's no difference between the parties' are wrong, you cannot implement a policy unless you are in power.

We welcome Jeremy's announcement that Labour will take the franchises back as they run out; the risk is what happens in the interim, possibly more direct awards or longer franchises to frustrate change, but we must campaign now to ensure that Network Rail is not broken up and privatised and that public protection is put in place for the freight sector and the threats from Europe and the 4th railway package are not ignored. It's been a great week for ASLEF and those we support but having the right people in place is just the first stage in ensuring that in all our sectors we have a secure and safe future.

Yours fraternally

Mick Whelan, general secretary



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Cover photo of Jeremy Corbyn: Andrew Wiard



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ABOUT **ASLEF**

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✉ 77 St John Street, London, EC1M 4NN ☎ 020 7324 2400

📠 020 7490 8697 📧 journal@aslef.org.uk 🌐 www.aslef.org.uk

Labour: Jez we can and Jez we did!

ALL three candidates endorsed by ASLEF – Jeremy Corbyn, Tom Watson and Sadiq Khan – topped the polls last month to become, respectively, Labour Party leader, deputy leader, and Labour's candidate for London Mayor.

The scale of victory for all three was overwhelming. Jeremy – who beat Andy Burnham, Yvette Cooper and Liz Kendall – started the campaign as a 200-1 outsider. But he enthused people who were either fed up with the fetid triangulation of Toxic Tony and the New Labour years or fed up with politics altogether. Here, they said, was an authentic candidate who stands up for what he believes, who says what he means, and means what he says, rather than worrying about a new piece of research from a free market think tank or tiny middle-class focus group.

Corbymania swept the country – 'Jez we can' – and his rallies attracted unprecedented numbers of people turned off by the 'Conservative-lite' market-oriented right-wing

QUOTE...

'It's extraordinary that the fossilised relics of New Labour are branding Jeremy Corbyn's ideas outmoded.'

Solomon Hughes in the Morning Star

...UNQUOTE



Tom congratulates Jeremy (top left); Corbymania (top right); ASLEF in Sheffield (above left); and Mick addresses a rally for Jeremy in Derby organised by Andy Botham

agenda of Tony Blair, Peter Mandelson, New Labour and Progress.

ASLEF got behind Jeremy early on, persuaded by his fresh, positive vision for Labour and his commitment to public ownership of the railways. We also backed Tom Watson – who beat Stella Creasy, Caroline Flint, Angela Eagle and Ben Bradshaw – to become Labour's new deputy leader, and Sadiq Khan, who beat Tessa Jowell, Diane Abbott, David Lammy, Christian Wolmar and Gareth Thomas. All three have written pieces for the *ASLEF Journal*.

Jeremy and Tom both thanked ASLEF in their acceptance speeches, broadcast live on BBC News, and GS Mick Whelan was interviewed by presenter Jane Hill live from the Queen Elizabeth II centre immediately after the results were announced.

Mick was also one of six trade union leaders – the others were Len McCluskey of Unite, Dave Prentis of Unison, Dave Ward of the CWU, Manuel Cortes of the TSSA and Ronnie Draper of the Bakers and Allied Food Workers' Union – who signed an open letter backing Jeremy to lead Labour to victory in 2020.

Ed: You don't have to live like a refugee

ED D'BELL, BEM committee member for District 1, and a member of Southampton Northam branch, makes a personal plea to help people displaced by the fighting in Syria

The worst refugee crisis since World War 2. That is how the crisis in the Mediterranean and Europe is being described. Hundreds of thousands of refugees, mainly from Syria, are fleeing the war-torn country to seek some sort of normality, a safe haven away from the bombings, killings and rapes.

They have taken the decision to move their families out of Syria, travelling thousands of miles, and putting themselves in danger trying to cross over the Mediterranean Sea to get away from the atrocities they have witnessed in their own country.

It took a picture in the papers of a three-year-old Syrian toddler, Aylan Kurdi, who died with his brother and mother in an attempt to cross the Mediterranean, to get the world's leaders to do more than just wring their hands.

If we were in the same situation, wouldn't we want to live? Wouldn't we want our families to live without fear? I believe we have a responsibility as human beings to help fellow humans who are suffering and looking for refuge. Please lobby your MP to get this government to do more, and visit act.refugeecouncil.org.uk

End of the century

Tosh McDonald, EC president, attended the reopening of the Mental Health Action Group drop-in centre in Sheffield and presented project co-ordinator Tim Jones – a long-time rocker – with one of ASLEF's much-coveted Ramones-style Educate Agitate Organise tee-shirts. 'Tim was instrumental in gaining free rail and bus travel for people suffering from mental health issues in South Yorkshire,' said Tosh. 'And was one of the first to join the Freedom Riders in the fight to oppose the



removal of this concession for pensioners and disabled people. Although the disabled have won back their free travel they continue to fight for



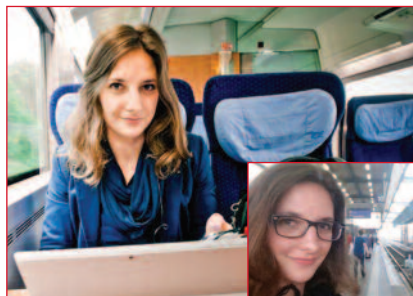
the return of free travel for pensioners in an act of true solidarity.'

ASLEF's annual assembly of delegates will be held at the Macdonald Highlands hotel in Aviemore from Monday 9 to Friday 13 May next year.

Student fed up with landlords lives on train

A STUDENT in Germany is so fed up with landlords that she has decided to live on a train. Leonie Müller, 23, who is studying at Tübingen University near Stuttgart, gave up her room in the spring. 'It started with a dispute with my landlord. I decided I didn't want to live there any more and then I realised that I didn't want to live anywhere any more.'

Leonie is quids – strictly speaking, euros – in. She pays £240 for a nationwide monthly season ticket while her last apartment cost £290. She carries her possessions – clothes, tablet computer, books and wash bag – in a backpack and washes in the on-board bathroom. 'I really feel at home on trains, and can visit so many more friends and cities. It's like being on vacation all



Pizza to go: Leonie on the right track

the time.'

She adds: 'I read, I write, I look out of the window and I meet nice people all the time. There's always something to do on a train and the next adventure is waiting just around the corner – provided you

want to find it.'

Leonie isn't always on the move. She does sleep at the apartments of her boyfriend, in Cologne, and her mother, in Berlin, when she visits them – by train.

QUOTE...

'Great British Railway Journeys, Michael Portillo's TV boreathon, is now being screened on a channel called Yesterday. Polly, who was once his party's future, is now, quite literally, Yesterday's man.'

Matthew Norman in *The Independent*

...UNQUOTE

ABERFAN – WERE YOU THERE?

Train drivers from Cardiff were among the hundreds of volunteers who rushed to the Welsh mining village of Aberfan to help dig out survivors after a spoil tip turned to slurry and engulfed its primary school in 1966. Were you one of them? A BBC documentary and book are in production to mark the 50th anniversary of the disaster in October next year and the producers are anxious to talk to anyone who took part in the rescue operation or were involved in the immediate aftermath of the tragedy. This is a chance to record the full story of those heroic efforts, so if you have any memories to share contact steve.humphries@testimonyfilms.com or Sue Elliott on 020 8998 9978.

CONFERENCES

The **Scottish TUC** is at the Caird Hall in Dundee from Monday 18 to Wednesday 20 April 2016. The **Labour Party conference** is in Liverpool from Sunday 25 to Wednesday 28 September.



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Off the rails



THIS Conservative government has never seen anything it doesn't want to sell. The latest bit of the family silver to be flogged off in George Osborne's fire sale is the government's slice of the action – 36.5% as it happens – in the King's Cross Central Limited Partnership which is developing 67 prime acres around King's Cross station. Transport Minister Robert Goodwill mutters, 'We are selling an asset we no longer need,' while Chief Secretary to the Treasury Greg Hands claims, 'Cutting the deficit and building a strong economy are priorities and key to this is getting out of the business of owning assets that should be in the private sector.' Sceptics such as Howard Kaye, EC member for District 5, say, 'It's just another example of the Tories selling off our assets, cheap, to their mates in the City.'



JEZ WE CAN! A triumphant Tosh McDonald (seen here shaking Jeremy Corbyn's hand at a rally at the Trades and Labour Club in Donny) cheerfully reported early in the campaign: 'ASLEF policy carried out in Doncaster Central CLP when, against all odds, and despite the MP, CLP president and secretary saying first we couldn't nominate, then we shouldn't nominate, we got a nomination meeting packed with members and affiliated supporters and nominated Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the party. Wish you could have seen some of the faces!' The ASLEF president added: 'Unfortunately, we could only get Tom Watson into second place as Doncaster tribalism won out for Caroline Flint! Rock'n'Jez we can roll!'



TOSH reckons you're never too old to rock'n'roll. As the EC president's mentor Bill Ronksley demonstrated with a passionate paean of praise for Jeremy Corbyn in *The Star*, Sheffield, his local paper. Bill wrote: 'I have retained my copy of Labour's 1945 general election manifesto, *Let Us Face the Future*, and this country would be a better place if politicians, particularly of the Labour Party, has stuck to the outlook and policies it advocated.'



CHRIS PROCTOR, once of this parish, was typically waspish about the Labour leadership contenders in his monthly column in *Tribune*. 'Liz Kendall instantly declared that she would never serve in a Corbyn cabinet. I don't blame her. She'd be much more comfortable in David Cameron's.' Ouch! He added, for good measure, 'I saw Liz telling Andrew Marr she was outraged that a *Mail on Sunday* interviewer had asked her about her weight. She's right, of course: but in her position I'd be even more bothered if someone asked me about my politics.'



TOM WATSON, though, offered a bridge over troubled waters. 'Liz Kendall is not a Tory and Jeremy Corbyn is not a Trotskyist. What they have in common is that they want a more socially just country and they don't want enshrined privilege. They all four of them don't want a Tory government.'

500 CLUB: E Murray, with number 82, won the September draw, scooping the Retired Members' Section prize money jackpot of £346.

It's school's out forever

A SLEF activists including DO5 Nigel Gibson, EC member Howard Kaye, WRC rep Collette Gibson, Mark Mulley and Andy Derrett, Ipswich branch, and Les Muir, ex-King's Cross, joined thousands of others in the labour movement at the traditional late summer rally in Burston, near Diss, in Norfolk, on Sunday 6 September to celebrate the longest strike in British history.

It began in 1914 when two teachers, Annie Higdon and her husband Tom, at the village school, were sacked for taking the side of the farm labourers, and their children, and for standing up against the landed gentry and the despotic right-wing rector of the local parish church. Sixty-six of the 72 children at Burston school walked out to join the Higdon's strike



school, initially in a tent on the village green, which ran until Tom died in 1939.

Speakers this year included Matt Wrack, general secretary of the FBU; Christine Blower, of the NUT; Clive Lewis, Labour MP for Norwich South; and Jeremy Corbyn, who marched with the ASLEF crew in front of our District 5 banner. Jeremy launched a fierce attack on the Tories' new Trade Union Bill, saying that our greatest achievements as a nation – and the freedoms we now enjoy – have come through popular demands and struggle.

'Jeremy gave an inspirational speech,' said



School's out for summer – ASLEF on the march at Burston with Jeremy Corbyn (above) and Dave Lewis and Mike Jackson of LGSM (left)

Nigel. 'About the importance of having a movement that is democratised, involving the grassroots, and providing the right to proper nationalised education, transport and health.'

Talk radio shock jock in the dock

Ofcom has launched an investigation into the radio station LBC after one of its presenters encouraged listeners to assault London Underground staff. The broadcasting watchdog acted after listeners complained that Steve Allen, who broadcasts from 4.0 to 6.30am, said people should 'beat up' Tube workers for having the temerity to take industrial action. Allen, a 61-year-old 'working-class Tory,' who lives



Steve Allen: 'My show, my rules'

in Bromley, south London, says he fills his show with his own 'experiences and prejudices' and likes to boast about his 'caustic tongue.' Listeners complained that his comments were 'likely to encourage violent and criminal behaviour.'



Daredevil ballerina Agathe Petrini – famous for her breathtaking high-altitude photo shoots in the French Alps – strikes a dramatic lady in red pose on a London Underground sign by the Shard.

QUOTE...

'To believe that New Labour's clapped out politics can transform the party's fortunes is delusional.' – **George Monbiot in The Guardian**

...UNQUOTE



As well as the dilapidated Disney castle at Dismaland, Banksy's 'bemusement park' at Weston-super-Mare, Somerset, we spotted this ASLEF Arnos Grove branch banner. Art lovers have flocked to see the subversive installations which include Cinderella in a Diana-style pumpkin carriage crash, surrounded by paparazzi; Pocket Money Loans, where kids borrow £5 but pay back £50 at the end of the month; the Grim Reaper dancing to *Staying Alive* on a dodgem car; refugees on boats, with dead bodies in the surrounding water; and Guerrilla Island, devoted to radical politics, including Ed Hall's trade union banners.



Tosh McDonald, ASLEF's president, joined Shadow Transport Secretary Michael Dugher, Chris Skidmore, chair of the Yorkshire area NUM, and Davey Douglass, former branch secretary at Hatfield main and veteran NUM activist, on the platform in the Miners' Memorial Garden at Edlington to mark the 30th anniversary of the closure of Yorkshire main colliery. Entertainment was provided by Black Isle, the Storm Trees, Tony Goodwin, the Pitman Poet, and Tequila Mockinbird.

EN GARDE ON MERSEYSIDE

Merseyrail has announced plans for a £400 million upgrade of trains and stations. The project – part-funded by the DfT, part by Merseytravel – will see the replacement of 35-year-old rolling stock which are some of the oldest trains on Britain's rail network. Merseytravel boss David Brown said the trains – which it will buy rather than lease, as at present – will run without guards. That, he says, will affect 200 men and women; a move partly offset by the creation of 70 customer service roles 'to reassure and assist passengers.'



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The train now arriving at Hollerton Junction brings big benefits

FANS of *The Archers* know just how important the railway stations at Hollerton Junction and Felpersham are to residents of a rural community – in the case of the long-running Radio 4 soap the villages of Ambridge, Lower Loxley and Penny Hassett in fictional Borseshire. But the social benefits of reopening some of Britain's rural railway lines – lost in the brutal Beeching cuts 50 years ago – are now being analysed.

'The cost of reinstating railway lines to modern standards can be significant,' admits the Campaign to Protect Rural England. 'And is therefore only likely to happen where there is a compelling reason. But with demand for rail growing year on year, investment



CPRE
Campaign to Protect Rural England
Standing up for your countryside

in rail capacity between and within our major cities is essential. That's why our new report asks – by way of a case study – whether it is now time to consider whether railways in rural areas should be expanded, too.'

The CPRE commissioned Greengauge 21 to examine the impact of reopening the Plymouth-Tavistock-Okehampton-Exeter railway, as a



The return of old rail lines would be a big boost for rural communities

second main line for Devon and Cornwall. It would ensure the West Country is not cut off by bad weather and landslips at Teignmouth and Dawlish on the existing main line from Paddington to Penzance.

The economic and social benefits of reopening rural rail lines could be enormous, concludes the CPRE. Jim Steer, director of Greengauge 21, said such a move would 'increase network resilience and connectivity' and enhance the prospects for rail freight, too.

Here come the warm jets



Mick Whelan, ASLEF's general secretary, was joined by, among others, barristers John Hendy and Michael Mansfield; actors Ricky Tomlinson and Maxine Peake; Giles Fraser, former canon chancellor at St Paul's Cathedral; Bruce Kent, former chair of CND; cricketer-turned-politician Imran Khan; comedian Jeremy Hardy; and musician Brian Eno in an open letter of support for Jeremy Corbyn published in *The Independent*. They said: 'We are trade unionists and anti-poverty and justice campaigners. Over the past 32 years we have lobbied, marched and picketed alongside Jeremy Corbyn. His dedication to peace and social justice has won our respect; as has his personal integrity and commitment to socialist values.'

Jack honoured with new road

A new £7 million road linking the A500 at Shavington with Gresty Road in Crewe, named Jack Mills Way, has been opened by his grandson Ian.

Jack was the driver of the Glasgow to London mail train viciously beaten around the head by the violent criminals who attacked him, and his second man David Whitby, during the Great Train Robbery in August 1963. Both men survived

Ian opened the road named for his grandfather Jack



the savage attack but suffered from the assault for the rest of their lives. 'It was a very proud moment for the family when my grandfather was honoured in this way,' said Ian. 'It has taken a long time for his bravery

to be recognised, 52 years in fact. Along with the naming of a railway engine *Driver Jack Mills* at the end of last year, it's fantastic for the family and our friends. It's just a shame my dad is not around to see it.'



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QUOTE...

'Leo Tolstoy wrote the epic *War and Peace* in less time than it is taking to produce the Chilcot report.'

– **Andy McSmith in *The Independent***

...UNQUOTE

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Well we got no choice all the girls and boys making all that noise



ASLEF Education project co-ordinator **SHIRLEY HANDSLEY goes back to school with East Midlands Trains driver Hitesh Parmar to talk about trade unions**

As I wait in reception at Wren Park primary school in Derby I start to feel nervous. Perhaps because I am back at school or perhaps because an ASLEF member is about to walk into an unpredictable situation – engaging fifty-plus 10-year-olds for three-quarters of an hour just before they announce school's out for summer! The member is Hitesh Parmar, a driver with East Midlands Trains based at Derby, who was asked by his son to take part in a careers week for Year 6, who would be starting secondary school in September.

The purpose of the week was to give the two Year 6 classes a warts-and-all insight into different jobs. Hitesh was there to talk about his role as a train driver but used the opportunity to talk about other jobs on the railway, rail safety, and explain why ASLEF plays such an important part in the rail industry.

He asked, 'What do you know about the rail industry?' and then, as tumbleweed blew across the hall, 'Anyone know anything about



Hello Mr Chips: Hitesh at Wren Park

Harry Potter and the Hogwarts Express? That was it – he had their attention! – and, aided by his slick PowerPoint presentation, he explained about a day in the life of a train driver; how to become a driver; other careers on the railway; safety; and the part a union like ASLEF plays.

Hitesh got the children involved by getting them to answer questions. When they weren't answering his questions, or asking questions of their own, you could hear a pin drop. They were soaking up information like blotting paper, taking notes and throwing hands in the air to get his attention. The time passed very quickly.

Hitesh did ASLEF proud, and he was in good company: other participants in the Wren Park careers week included a dentist; an accountant; a firefighter; a police forensic scientist; a submarine engineer with Rolls Royce Marine; and a surgeon from the Royal Derby Hospital.

We hear a lot about youth employability and youth unemployment. You can blame the government, the teachers, the parents or the neighbour's cat but, based on what I have seen, you cannot blame the trade union movement and you can't blame ASLEF. Because Hitesh is one of many ASLEF members who works with schools to offer children an insight into our industry. I was nervous because I wanted this to go well. It took me back a good few years to a time when someone came to talk to my class and influenced the direction I took.

QUOTE...

'While fares are going up, punctuality is going down. The poor performance in the south-east, in particular, highlights how train operators need to deliver a more consistent day-to-day service which passengers can rely on.' – **David Sidebottom of Transport Focus**

...UNQUOTE

SMOKE AND MIRRORS

'The government is using smoke and mirrors to disguise the fact that the real cost of rail travel is going up again,' says Bruce Williamson of the campaign group Railfuture. 'The Conservatives promised in their manifesto that there would be a freeze on rail fares for the lifetime of this parliament, but the cost continues to rise. People's incomes are stagnant, but because the government insists on using RPI instead of CPI, rail fares will go up 1%. It looks like they are trying to drive people off the railways and onto the roads.'

FEARS OVER DAWLISH LINE

Oliver Colville, Conservative MP for Plymouth Sutton & Devonport, has written to the government over rising concerns about the West Country's only main line rail link. He says opening an alternative route to the south-west is 'certainly something the government should be looking into.' He spoke out after transport analyst Neil Mitchell warned that rock falls on rail lines in Devon and Cornwall are 'a tragedy waiting to happen.'

METRO FLEET REBURBISHED

A £30 million refurbishment of Tyne & Wear Metro's 86 carriage train fleet has been completed five months ahead of schedule. The tab was picked up by the government's 'all change' modernisation programme.



Tosh McDonald, looking just the ticket in a red ASLEF return the railways to public ownership 'train ticket' tee-shirt, supports the South Yorkshire freedom riders at Barnsley station.

SEX CRIMES SOAR ON RAIL NETWORK

The number of recorded sexual offences on trains and stations has risen by a staggering 25% to a record level, according to new figures published by the British Transport Police. They recorded 1,399 sex offences in England, Scotland and Wales in 2014-15 – up 282 on the previous year. Violent crime also increased – up 8% to 9,149. The privatised TOCs briefed journalists that the rise in sex crimes was 'mainly due to a campaign to encourage reporting of these offences.' But passenger groups backed union demands for guards to be retained and station staff to be increased.



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TU Bill: Illiterate, illiberal and illegal



As the Tories try to smash free trade unions in Britain and leave hard working men and women at the mercy of bad bosses JO STEVENS says their despicable new trade union bill should be opposed by everyone who believes in freedom

THE Tories' trade union bill is illegal, illiterate and illiberal. Illegal because it breaches the UK's international legal obligations. Illiterate because it is incoherent, inconsistent, bureaucratic, and nonsensical. And illiberal because it requires government officials to snoop into trade union affairs, seize documents and impose fines – all at the union's own expense.

As trailed in the Tory manifesto, and the Queen's Speech, unions will face additional restrictions before members can take action which is legally protected. The ballot will require not just a majority of those voting, but a majority of those entitled to vote, a threshold which denies the democratic will of those choosing to take part in the ballot and, effectively, treats a failure to vote as a 'no' vote.

Additional restrictions are imposed in 'important public services' – a wider definition than the 'essential public services' in existing law. This applies not just to those directly providing the service, but also to those involved in ancillary activities, like cleaners in a hospital. In these 'important public services' not only must there be a majority voting 'yes', and a 50% turnout, but 40% of those entitled to vote must have voted in favour.

A CRUEL INJUSTICE BY THE TORIES

It's a cruel injustice that the Tories regard these activities as 'important public services' for the purposes of curtailing trade union activities, yet don't think these services should be provided by the public sector and have privatised many of them.

There will be even more new requirements to satisfy before a ballot is legal. The ballot paper must now include 'a reasonably detailed indication of the matters in issue in the trade dispute', 'the types of industrial action' contemplated and when the action is likely to take place. All designed to make it difficult, if not impossible, for a union to comply with the law, to deter members from voting in favour of action and to give employers the maximum opportunity to mount a legal challenge.

If the union manages to satisfy all of this, and members vote in favour of action, the union will now be required to give two weeks' notice before action can start (rather than one



Jo with general secretary Mick Whelan at our AAD in Brighton last year

week at present) and will have to re-ballot if the action continues for more than four months.

PICKETS TURNED INTO CRIMINALS

Pickets are to be turned into criminals, by requiring the union to appoint a picket supervisor who must report to the police. The legislation goes into ridiculous detail, even requiring the picket supervisor to 'wear a badge, armband, or other item' to identify them. This smacks of something from the 1930s.

Under the Tory bill, unions will only be able to receive political fund contributions from those members who have opted in, in writing, to the political fund. Every union will have only three months from when the new act becomes law to sign up members to the political fund. This is an impossible task, designed to prevent unions from spending money on campaigning as well as a nakedly political attack on opposition to the Tory government and the funding of the Labour Party.

It is a blatant manoeuvre to shut down democracy and debate and an outright assault on freedom of expression and protest. It's reinforced by requiring unions to publish details of all their political expenditure, giving details of every amount over £2,000, who it

Jo campaigning on the streets of Cardiff (above); and celebrating victory on the platform after the count on 7 May (top)

was paid to and the nature of it. The bill imposes absurdly bureaucratic requirements on public authorities to publish minutely detailed data on union officials employed by them who are carrying out union activities or duties.

The intention is clearly to deter public employers from allowing facility time, even where it is agreed, with the further aim of preventing union officials from having the time and resources to represent their members. And, if that isn't enough, the government also gives itself the power to impose regulations which would restrict the amount of facility time employers can actually give.

CERTIFICATION OFFICER TO SNOOPER

To cap it all, the bill seeks to transform the role of the certification officer from a neutral adjudicator on union law and rules into a state snooper. The certification officer will be required to investigate all sorts of internal union issues, whether or not any member has complained, demand documents and issue orders against the union which can be enforced, not only by the certification officer, but by any union member. And unions must pay for the privilege of this by paying a levy to fund the certification officer.

Trade unions are voluntary, democratic organisations, essential in a free society. No other organisations face such state intrusion and restriction on their activities. This bill is the work of a vindictive Tory party using the levers of government for its own political ends, seeking to outlaw legitimate protest and opposition, stifle free speech and choke off the finances and resources of political opponents.

It must be opposed by everyone who values freedom and the rule of law.

● Jo Stevens is Labour MP for Cardiff Central. She was born in Swansea, brought up in Mold, and has lived in Cardiff for 25 years. She is a lawyer and, before she was elected to parliament in May, a director of Thompsons solicitors, a firm dedicated to representing trade union members and men and women mistreated or injured at work.

ASLEF in action

A SLEF sent five delegates – Mick Whelan, general secretary; Simon Weller, national organiser; Dave Calfe, EC vice-president; Gary Boyle, of Manchester Piccadilly No 1; and Mark Prenter, of Waterloo Nine Elms – to the 147th Trades Union Congress in Brighton from Sunday 13 to Wednesday 16 September. EC president Tosh McDonald, executive committee members Marz Colombini and Howard Kaye, and district organisers Dicky Fisher and Nigel Gibson attended as visitors.

Delegates from 52 unions, representing 6.3 million members, gathered on the south coast for



the annual parliament of the trade union movement. Debates on skills and education, collective bargaining, industrial policy, transport, housing, public services, pensions, civil liberties, and employment rights, ahead of the party conferences, helped to set the political agenda for the autumn.

As well as the motions on the conference floor, and the plethora of fringe meetings every lunchtime and evening, congress was an opportunity for ASLEF



TUC photos by Andrew Wiard

reps to meet activists from other unions who face similar challenges in different fields and who are doing the same job – representing members – while trying to make Britain a better place in which to work and live.

Brighton rocks for Gary, Marz, Simon, Tosh, Mick, Dave and Mark (left) and Nigel, Howard and Dicky (top)

The TUC met in Brighton which, famously, according to the journalist and author Keith Waterhouse, 'looks as though it is a town helping the police with their inquiries.'

Tory rail policy is a shambles



Gary Boyle

Congress reaffirmed its commitment to public ownership in the transport debate on Monday morning. Seconding a motion moved by Manuel Cortes, general secretary of the TSSA, Gary Boyle said: 'Government rail policy is a shambles wrapped in a fiasco inside a disaster. They made lots of promises about what they were going to do for rail before the election but, strangely enough, after the election these promises became too expensive to deliver!'

'It's the passengers, and the workers, who suffer from this short-termism. Private rail means they can't see beyond the next profit target. There is no long-term strategy.'

'The Tories talk about benefit cheats but the rail industry is full of corporate cheats. Failure is no barrier to future franchise success. That's why we welcome Jeremy Corbyn's pledge to return the railway to public hands.'

QUOTE...

'Requiring pickets to give their names to the police force? This isn't Franco's Britain.' – **David Davis**, Tory MP for Haltemprice & Howden

...UNQUOTE

Heroic struggle of Martyrs

John Bercow, MP for Buckingham and the first Speaker of the House of Commons to address the Trades Union Congress, called for more respect for 'the important work of unions'. Speaking to delegates on Monday morning, before presiding over the debate that afternoon on the Tories' controversial Trade Union Bill, which has been described as 'the most serious attack on workers' rights in a generation', he said: 'The work you do in resolving grievances, standing up for the disadvantaged, is important work which deserves respect, and it certainly has mine.' He spoke of the 'heroic

struggle' of the Tolpuddle Martyrs and said it was to the credit of the TUC and its affiliated unions that they campaigned for workers' rights in countries such as Saudi Arabia and Zimbabwe.

Speaker Bercow admitted that when he became politically active, as a right-wing Conservative student at Essex University, he would not have wanted to address a room of trade unionists, adding: 'And, believe me, you would not have wanted to be addressed by me!' But he said he now sees the work of trade unions as central to creating a decent, and more equal, society, adding that he had



opened a crèche at the Commons and ensured that all employees at the Palace of Westminster are paid at least the London living wage.

QUOTE...

'This Tory government is intent on implementing a divisive manifesto that will hurt working families, damage our economy and make inequality worse.' – **Frances O'Grady**, general secretary of the TUC

...UNQUOTE

New Shadow Transport Secretary on platform in Brighton

Does rail privatisation deliver the best deal for passengers and taxpayers? That was the question posed at – and the title of – the Action for Rail fringe meeting on Monday lunchtime. 'Not surprisingly, the answer was no,' said Gary Boyle dryly.

Paul Nowak, assistant general secretary of the TUC, said: 'The railways are a vital public service, but is the current system delivering? Advocates of privatisation argue that it has brought record passenger

growth, investment and innovation, as well as cheaper and better services. But we know that privatisation has led to significant fare increases, that private sector investment has not been forthcoming, and that taxpayers are subsidising shareholder dividends and company profits.'

Other speakers on the platform included Lilian Greenwood, just appointed Shadow Secretary of State for Transport in Jeremy

Corbyn's new shadow cabinet; John Stittle, Professor of Accounting at Essex University, and author of a feature on *The Real Cost of the Privatised Railway* in the September *Journal*; Martin Abrams of the Campaign for Better Transport; and Edward Welsh of the Rail Delivery Group.

Mark Prenter, speaking from the floor, made the point that the privatised railway has failed to help manufacturing and the wider economy in this country.

Tories declaring war on organised labour

JEREMY CORBYN, making his first major speech as Labour Party leader, told the TUC on Tuesday afternoon that the party can win the general election in 2020 with its progressive vision of 'a better society.' He was greeted when he arrived at the Brighton Centre by Corbynistas outside shouting 'Jez we can! Jez we can!' and, in the hall, by a standing ovation from delegates. He got another at the end of his 15 minute speech.

Jeremy said he was a proud and passionate trade unionist, gave delegates a brief CV of some of the work he has done as a union activist, and said he was pleased to have the chance to address congress. Something, he added, that he thought every Labour party leader should do.

He talked about the role of trade unions in the history of the Labour Party, promised to restore the values of the unions to the heart of the party, and made an unqualified commitment to repeal the Trade Union Bill currently going through parliament.

The Tories, he said, are 'declaring war on organised labour' with their Bill which passed its second reading the previous evening with a majority of 33. 'When we have been elected with a majority in 2020, we are going to repeal this Bill and replace it with a workers' rights agenda.'

He rejected suggestions that trade union

solidarity was a 'thing of the past' and said unions are a force for good with an influence felt not just in the workplace but throughout society.

He condemned the failure of the free market to deliver decent, affordable housing for people in this country and, in answer to the Tory charge that he is a 'deficit denier,' accused Prime Minister David Cameron of being a 'poverty denier' as more and more workers, on zero hours contracts or the minimum wage, are forced to use food banks. Jeremy electrified voters during the leadership campaign and, in the three days between his election as party leader and his speech to the TUC, more than 30,000 people joined the party.

QUOTE...

'In the 26 years I've covered the TUC as a journalist that was the most pro-trade union speech I've heard by a Labour leader. No ifs, buts, qualifications or apologies from a man unafraid to declare his pride in trade unionism – vowing to take off new Tory shackles if Labour wins in 2020.' – **Kevin Maguire** in the *Daily Mirror*

...UNQUOTE



Young hit hard in Age of Austerity



Dave Calfe, speaking from the podium on Wednesday morning, made a passionate case for the government to act to alleviate the plight of young people in Britain. He said: 'The living standards of young workers have been hit hardest by austerity. Young workers still receive a lower rate of minimum wage, at £3.87 per hour for under 18s, which is under half of the Brighton living wage of £7.85, and even when Osborne's so-called "living wage" comes in, it will only be for those aged 25 and over.'

'With the spread of zero hours contracts the wages of those aged 22 to 29 has seen a fall of 12.5% between 2009 and 2014. Apprenticeship starts for the under 19s have increased by a mere 3% since 2010. Four in ten of all apprenticeships have actually

been taken by those aged 25 and over!

'University grants for the poorest in our society have been scrapped, so those who are not put off university education are starting their working lives with huge debts. Not to mention the effect of tripling tuition fees in the last parliament.'

'When many of us left school, finding work may not have been easy, but it was there, and many of those jobs had guaranteed hours, sick pay, holiday pay and a

final salary pension. If young people can find work today it is minimum wage, on zero hours contracts, with no chance of a final salary pension and generally not unionised.'

'When I left school at 16, and worked at Middlesex Poly on the ground staff, workers coming up to retirement told me I would be paying their pension in retirement; today those of retirement age who continue to work are paying the benefits of the young who cannot find reasonably paid work. The workplace has been turned upside down!'



Weller done, Simon

Simon Weller, ASLEF's national organiser, who spoke passionately from the podium against the Trade Union Bill on Tuesday morning, was re-elected to the general council of the TUC. He polled 287,000 votes. On Wednesday morning Simon was also elected to serve on the TUC executive committee.

KILL THE BILL Mick Whelan spoke at the TUC on Monday night called **Fighting for our Jobs**. Other speakers included **POA; Matt Wrack of the FBU; Jenny Forman of the CWU; Spence of Equity; Dave Ward of the TSSA; TUC; and Manuel Cortes of the TSSA.**

Coal not dole

Mark Prenter, speaking from the podium on Monday, addressed delegates in a debate on the country's deep mine coal industry as part of a morning spent discussing jobs, growth and the new economy.

He said: 'The end of industrial scale deep coal mining in Britain is a scandal. It's ideological madness from the government, the criminal destruction of an industry which should be playing an important role in our economic recovery. The decision not to

invest in the industry – there are more than 100 million tonnes of coal in the ground – is disastrous for the 2,000 employees of UK Coal and a serious blow to the communities in which they live and work, the local economies, and thousands of other workers in the longer supply chain.'

'Coal is the number one commodity transported on the UK's railway, yet the amount carried across the network is falling. Job cuts have



Jeremy's speech went down a storm in Brighton

Living on two dollars a day



Mick Whelan, who moved an emergency motion on Colombia from the podium on Monday

The GS addresses afternoon, chaired a packed Justice for Colombia fringe meeting at Tuesday lunchtime. 'Colombia is the most dangerous place in the world to be a trade union activist,' said Mick. 'More than 3,000 have been killed in the last 25 years and many more have been unjustly imprisoned. Colombia has one of the highest levels of inequality in the world; 50% of the people live in poverty and 20% of the population live in absolute poverty, on less than \$2 a day.' Speakers included Tony Woodhouse of Unite; Witney Chávez of the Colombian TUC; Paul Maskey, Sinn Féin MP for West Belfast; Mariela Kohon, director of JfC; and Steve Cavalier, chief executive of Thompsons solicitors.



Mark Prenter

been announced in the rail freight sector across the grades. In my area, Thanet, the closure of the mining industry has had an enormous impact on the local community. Congress, we must continue to support the miners and their communities because the Tories do not have a Plan B.

Off message



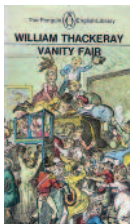
THE ASLEF crew stayed at the Old Ship on the seafront in Brighton, which was where our annual assembly of delegates was held last year. AAD met in the ballroom where the Italian composer and violin virtuoso Niccolò Paganini played in 1831. Five years later Paganini opened a casino in Paris – the failure of which left him financially ruined. Ironical, then, that after Andrew Lloyd Webber lost a bet with his brother Julian over the result of a Leyton Orient match, he wrote *Variations on a Theme by Paganini* for the cellist, who appeared on the original chart-topping album in 1978 alongside blues guitarist Gary Moore, keyboard player Rod Argent, jazz/rock drummer Jon Hiseman and flautist Barbara Thompson.



SAMUEL ROGERS, a minor poet, popular in his lifetime, but best known now for an account of his friendships with William Wordsworth, Lord Byron, Sir Walter Scott, Edmund Burke and Charles James Fox, memorably wrote after one trip to the south coast in 1829: 'Brighton is still very gay and full of balls.' Speaking of which, delegates explained away the poor showing of Yvette Cooper in the Labour leadership election – she came a distant third, beating only the no-hope Blairite Liz Kendall – by the long shadow cast by her husband, the former Shadow Chancellor. 'Vote Hilary, get Bill might be a vote winner in the States,' said one activist. 'Vote Yvette and get Ed, too, is not.'



WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY, in his classic 19th century novel *Vanity Fair*, has several characters escape from London for the Ship Inn in Brighton – actually the Ship Tavern when Thackeray was writing in 1847 – and now the Old Ship. Why? Because, as the redoubtable Becky Sharp tells her



husband, Captain Rawdon Crawley, 'A comfortable inn in Brighton is better than a spunging-house in Chancery Lane.' The spunging-house to which she refers – where debtors were confined by a bailiff and given a couple of days to clear their obligations before being taken to court – was actually in Cursitor Street, just off Chancery Lane, and was also the model for Coavinses in Dickens's *Bleak House*.

ASLEF delegates were media magnets in Brighton. Mick Whelan was featured in a full page interview by Conrad Landin in the *Morning Star* on Monday, wrote a full page feature on the Trade Union Bill in the paper on Tuesday, and was quoted at length by Nadia Khomami in *The Guardian*. Simon Weller was interviewed by John Pienaar on Radio 5 and Marz Colombini by political correspondent Chris Mason on Radio 4.

LAST RITES for Toxic Tony and New Labour? As delegates danced on the grave of what TB liked to call 'the project' George Monbiot wisely wrote in *The Guardian*: 'You can sustain policies without values for a while but then, like plants without soil, the movement wilts and dies.'

QUOTE...

'The Tories' Trade Union Bill isn't just an attack on trade unions, it's part of a broader attack on the right to protest, on freedom of association, freedom of assembly, and freedom of expression.' – **Shami Chakrabarti**, director of Liberty

...UNQUOTE

SOLIDARITY WITH PALESTINE

Mick Whelan spoke at the Palestine Solidarity Campaign fringe meeting on Tuesday evening. Other speakers included Christine Blower of the NUT; Manuel Cortes of the TSSA; and Liz Lawrence of the University and College Union.

REBALANCING THE ECONOMY

Tosh McDonald spoke at the Unions 21 fringe meeting on Tuesday lunchtime devoted to The Rebalancing Act: How we can create a fairer, more productive economy in Britain.

No alternative to austerity – the most dangerous lie



David Cameron and George Osborne are proud to boast that we are living in the Conservative Age of Austerity. Margaret Thatcher said there was no alternative. But FRASER COATS of Bathgate branch calls time on their argument

IN WHAT must surely rank as one of the most remarkable propaganda coups, the great majority of voters at the general election in May – the 88% who opted for the Conservatives, Labour, the Liberal Democrats and UKIP – chose to vote for a raft of economic policies similar to those imposed on Chile in 1973 only after the democratically elected left-wing government of Salvador Allende was bombed out of office, a military dictatorship installed, political opponents rounded up, tortured and killed, trade union leaders jailed, dissidents shot, activists ‘disappeared,’ and university economics departments that taught anything other than the market-obsessed neo-liberal nonsense of Milton Friedman and his Chicago School, shut down.

MONSTROUS RAMPAGE

Margaret Thatcher in Britain and Ronald Reagan in America embraced Milton Friedman’s ideas – if not General Pinochet’s no-nonsense way of putting them into practice – in the 1980s, lending them international credibility, and so successfully has the Chicago School gospel been spread since – and the debate around alternative economic strategies been closed down – that it has become a global axiom. ‘There is,’ claimed Mrs Thatcher, ‘no alternative.’

The resulting deregulated banking sector, unleashed to rampage its monstrous way through economy after economy, reached a chronic conclusion as disastrous as it was inevitable with the collapse of the world’s financial system in 2008. Far from being unforeseen, as the neo-

liberal narrative would now like you to believe, the crash was, in fact, widely foreseen and warned against by political leaders such as Fidel Castro and economists like Steve Keen and Michael Hudson.

PURCHASING POWER

But just as we bought the lie that the days of boom and bust were over, so we are invited to believe another; that having transferred the debts of an inherently unstable system onto the public balance sheet, austerity for the people is necessary to reduce the annual budget deficit as a means of tackling that debt. In other words, the debt can and must be paid by reducing the living standards not of the very rich, but of ordinary working people. This is the theory that many North American and Western European economists and politicians, and 88% of the UK electorate, have fallen for. It is the most dangerous lie of our time.

For thousands of years, from Babylon to America under British rule to post-Second World War Germany and the Brady Plan in South America, the successful solution to a debt crisis, as described by no less a radical than Adam Smith, has involved writing debts down to the ability to pay, or out and out cancellation. Recession has been countered not by reducing, but increasing, the annual deficit in order to invest in jobs, infrastructure and public services, which in turn restores the purchasing power needed to return an economy to health. The creation of the welfare state here, and FDR’s New Deal in America, were just such successful responses to economic crises.



Margaret Thatcher (above left) and Ronald Reagan (above) were in thrall to the supply side, or trickle down, economic policies advocated by Milton Friedman (top) disparagingly described by George Bush as ‘voodoo economics’



But the dogma of austerity, specifically designed to do the opposite, dictates that hedge funds must be replenished, reckless loans guaranteed, losing bets refunded and seven figure salaries and obscene multi-million dollar bonuses secured; the cost of this bailout to be recouped by cutting jobs, driving down the wages of ordinary working people, smashing the trade unions, raiding pension funds and sanctioning or, preferably, abolishing benefits. In short, a class-driven strategy which destroys the spending power of ordinary people by diverting disposable income into the financial sector, thereby guaranteeing that economic shrinkage, not growth, takes place in the real economy of goods and services. A war of finance against not only the working-class but, uniquely, industry as well.

PARASITES AND LEECHES

The extractive nature of lending is highlighted by the current ‘recovery’ based almost entirely on an increase in house prices resulting from Help to Buy. This is Cameron’s cynical nod to lenders, whose profits contribute to gross domestic product and therefore

give an illusion of growth but, in practice, actually extract money – paid out in increased mortgage repayments and interest – from the productive economy. The same applies to the explosion in pay day loan sharks whose interest rates are often in four figures.

Rescuing the banks wasn’t about saving the economy, but about saving the parasites and leeches – the wealth extractors, not wealth creators – of the financial world.

PERFECT COVER

Recovery is not the goal of the neo-liberals; they want a worldwide redistribution of wealth from the bottom up, and Oxfam says the process is well under way, with austerity providing the perfect cover. And with the enrichment of the few comes the impoverishment of the many. Reversing this trend is the most urgent challenge confronting socialists and the trade union movement today. Austerity is a confidence trick, a carefully calculated – and so far successful – plan to concentrate wealth in the hands of a tiny elite. But it depends upon us believing the fiction.

My plan to build a better railway for Britain

JEREMY CORBYN was one of four candidates – Andy Burnham, Yvette Cooper and Liz Kendall were the others – standing to become leader of the Labour Party. Here Jeremy sets out his plans for the future of Britain's railways

THE rail network was privatised under the Railways Act 1993. In opposition Labour – under both John Smith and Tony Blair initially – promised to bring the railways back into public ownership. The Labour Party conference has twice endorsed the position that rail franchises should be taken back in-house as they expire. Privatisation of the railways has caused immense wastage through fragmentation of the rail network, inefficient financing, and by leakage through payments of profits to private shareholders.

We need to rebuild an integrated publicly-owned railway network that is run by the people, for the people. Extricating the railways from the mess of privatisation would save hundreds of millions of pounds a year – money that could be used to increase investment, improve accessibility and reduce passenger fares.

INCREDIBLY EXPENSIVE

The rail franchising process is incredibly expensive and wasteful, both to the bidding companies (which pass on costs through higher fares) and to the government to administer the process.

The railways are strategically important infrastructure and, as such, should be run by the people, for the people. This is

○ **MICK WHELAN**, ASLEF's general secretary, warmly welcomed Jeremy's public commitment to bring Britain's railways back into public ownership when the Labour Party is next in power. Mick, who introduced Jeremy to a media scrum of reporters, photographers and TV news crews, said: 'Jeremy has been a breath of fresh air in politics this year. He has got people excited about politics again. That's why we backed him for the leadership of the Labour Party. We thought Jeremy would be good for the party, good for the railways, and very good for Britain.'



GS Mick Whelan, EC members Dave Calfe, Marz Colombini, Andy Hourigan and Howard Kaye, and DOs Finn Brennan and Dicky Fisher, stood shoulder to shoulder with Jeremy at King's Cross when the MP announced his plans for Britain's railways



uncontroversial, supported by a two-third majority of the British public (including by a majority of Conservative voters). No one thinks it controversial that our roads are run in the public sector, so why shouldn't our railways be, too?

There are economic, social and environmental goals in increasing rail use and accessibility. They are too important to fail. When private providers failed on the East Coast main line franchise, the government established a public company, Directly Operated Railways, to run the franchise. Under public control, it outperformed its private predecessors on both reliability and punctuality – and returned better value to the Treasury. What government serious about reducing the deficit would privatise a revenue generating asset? Yet the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government re-privatised the franchise.

CO-OPERATIVE MODEL

A Labour government would introduce a new Railways Act in 2020 to progressively bring the railways back into public control, run in the public interest, to meet social, economic and environmental goals.

All parts of the railway should work together for the common good – with strategic management representing the industry, government (local and national), passengers and workers. A more co-operative model of public ownership.

Passengers would benefit from an integrated network, rather than having to negotiate different websites, complicated ticketing structures, different terms and conditions, different peak times on different operators, and be faced with station staff who are often unable to advise on routes and interchanges run by other operators.

DOUBLE DIGIT PROFIT

UK train rolling stock (the train carriages we sit or, too often, stand in) is leased to franchises by rolling stock companies in an incredibly expensive process that has left our rolling stock outdated on many lines. Under public

ownership, the railways should cut out the RoSCo intermediaries and procure rolling stock directly. These leasing companies are making double-digit profit margins, causing higher fares.

The leasing process should be replaced by a long-term procurement strategy based on strategic long-term investment in the railways that develops UK manufacturing, skills and jobs. A national investment bank should fund long-term infrastructure improvements and improvements to accessibility for disabled passengers.

By re-integrating the UK railways and running them co-operatively for the public good, we can bring social, economic and environmental gains including more easily understood and cheaper fares for passenger; more accessible trains and stations for disabled passengers; and better terms and conditions for rail workers.

MODERN SERVICE

It will benefit the environment by increasing rail capacity and reducing costs to encourage rail use over car and air transport; stimulate the economy by increasing investment in new high speed rail, creating jobs and connecting more towns and cities; and give passengers, rail workers and politicians more democratic say over the strategic development of UK railways.

It will provide a more modern and integrated service for all passengers.

○ **JEREMY CORBYN** has been Labour MP for Islington North since 1983. He is a member of the Socialist Campaign Group and the Labour Representation Committee and is now Labour leader.



The GS with one depot Dave and his union brothers

opportunity for members to meet the GS; I would recommend you book him early! So on behalf of the branch I would like to thank Mick for his attendance, and make a special note about driver Dave Chalkley (retired); not only has he been loyal to ASLEF for 50 years but he has also worked at the same depot for that length of time. Enjoy your retirement, Dave.

Wendy Hurst,
secretary

Mick's a hit – so book him early

HITCHIN branch had the pleasure of welcoming the general secretary on 20 August. Mick Whelan gave us a rundown on the state of the nation. Some of our members could not believe how devious the FOCs and TOCs can be. He outlined why ASLEF supported Jeremy

Corbyn as Labour leader, explained how the political fund levy is used (primarily campaigning for our members) and, at the end of the meeting, presented loyalty badges to members including a 50 year badge and certificate from the branch. It was a fantastic evening and a great

50 up for Eric

It was with great pleasure that Cardiff branch welcomed Andy Hudd, EC member for District 7, and DO7 Brian Corbett to our August meeting. Andy and Brian gave a talk to members and then answered questions



Brian congratulates Eric Fuller

from the floor. The highlight of the evening was the presentation of a 50

year membership medallion to Arriva Trains Wales driver Brother Eric Fuller. Brian read out Eric's service record, showing all the depots he has worked in. The branch thanked Brothers Andy and Brian for attending as it is always a pleasure when they visit.

JF Bracchi,
secretary



Brother Bob Jones, with his wife Dilys by his side, as she has always been while he served the membership at Birkenhead depot, as branch secretary and local rep, received his 50 year medallion at head office from GS Mick Whelan, alongside DO3 Colin Smith and EC3 Andy Hourigan.

Upcoming events

RAINHAM – THURSDAY 1 OCTOBER

Southeastern retired and working members' reunion from 11.00 at Rainham Social Club, 86 Station Rd, Rainham, Kent.

COALVILLE – SUNDAY 11 OCTOBER

It's 25 years since our little depot shut. To mark the occasion, we're having a reunion at Hugglescote social club from 12.0. £5 per person to cover the cost of the food, cheques payable to P Geary to 4 Dennis Street, Hugglescote, Coalville, Leics, LE67 2FP. Details from Ian Farnfield on 07900 905931.

FRATTON – WEDNESDAY 14 OCTOBER

Fratton and Portsmouth railway reunion from 12.00 to 18.00 at the BRSA club next to Fratton station. Buffet and raffle and all retired and active staff are very welcome. For info call Gary White on 07798 706204.

MARYLEBONE – FRIDAY 30 OCTOBER

The annual reunion will take place from 16.30 in the Allsop Arms, Gloucester Place, NW1 – just a couple of minutes' walk from Marylebone station. Buffet provided. Anyone associated with Marylebone branch – past or present – is welcome.

Please send your branch news and photographs to journal@aslef.org.uk



It was a pleasure to invite EC1 Marz Colombini to Portsmouth & IOW branch for August's meeting. Marz presented Mark Taylor, a loyal ASLEF member, with his 35 year badge. Mark is a true driving professional and it's been a great honour to have worked with him over the years.

John Glazebrook, secretary

First class talk from Simon

Cambridge was pleased to have national organiser Simon Weller as its guest speaker in August. Simon gave the branch an insight into our union and how the upcoming Trade Union Bill will affect not just ASLEF but all trade unions. He also told us (being a TOC only branch) about the problems faced by ASLEF



Simon wins his blue with the Cambridge crew

members in the freight sector. With a lot of newcomers to the branch, a healthy q&a session followed. The branch would like to place on record its thanks to Simon for

taking the time to travel up to Cambridge to meet us. Our next meeting is at 17.30 on Monday 5 October.
Martin Haylett, secretary

Rail safety picture not as rosy as ORR suggests



WILLIAM SEYMOUR, a workplace accident lawyer with Thompsons solicitors, examines a new report from the ORR which isn't quite what it seems

NEW figures from the Office for Rail and Road suggest that Britain's railways were the safest in the European Union for both workers and passengers last year. But while the number of fatalities and injuries fell between 2005 and 2009, and then stayed fairly constant from 2009 to 2014, worker health and safety in some parts of the industry remains poor and failings are too often ignored by both the regulator and employers.

Worryingly, issues such as the psychological health of train drivers, which deserve much greater attention, are not covered by the ORR report. The government, the regulator, Network Rail and train operators need to spend less time patting themselves on the back, based on bald statistics, and more time on the complete welfare of the workers who keep the railways running.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

Look at the statistics in any detail and the story isn't as rosy. Those who maintain railway infrastructure are at considerable risk – from 2009 to 2014, 47% of all accidents and injuries happened to infrastructure workers; they accounted for 20 of the 25 worker fatalities over the last decade; and the number of major injuries they suffered increased by 16% in 2013-14.

Network Rail officials will be concerned with the 10 level crossing fatalities in 2013-14 and the 22% increase in overall harm at level crossings, but rather than recognising that dangerous level crossings is an issue that affects railway workers, pedestrians and motorists alike, the report is mostly focused on pedestrian danger and not the impact on railway workers. From cases we see we know the effect on the mental health of those who witness accidents, especially when there are fatalities. Employers need to take their responsibility to promote the psychological rehabilitation of workers experiencing post-traumatic stress or

similar conditions very seriously indeed.

Whilst we may be at one end of the European league table for injuries and fatalities amongst the rail workforce, the rate of suicides on the line here is consistently amongst the highest in Europe. And, thanks to the Tory-led coalition, the train driver or railway worker who witnesses a suicide and suffers from mental health problems as a result cannot now make a claim to the Criminal Injury Compensation Scheme to rebuild their lives.

Glossed over in the report is the major safety issue of obstructions on the line. For drivers, given there is very little protocol in place, the issue of who is responsible to deal with the obstruction is a real dilemma; should they put themselves in danger to remove it? The lack of clarity is made worse by confused authority between Network Rail and the train operator meaning track and train workers have different employers.

LARGE DOSE OF SALT

At Thompsons we regularly represent ASLEF members who have sustained physical or mental injuries while working on the railway. It is clear to us that the ORR's optimistic report should be taken with a large dose of salt. As always, the devil is in the detail. While the general trend on worker health and safety in the rail industry may well be encouraging, the regulator, and employers, shouldn't rest on their laurels. There remains a huge amount of work to be done to deliver the kind of working environment members deserve.

Members who are injured at work should rest assured that, through the ASLEF legal service, expert advice and representation is available from Thompsons for free. And, unlike high street law firms, and those you see advertising on TV, ASLEF guarantees you will take home 100% of any compensation you are awarded.



Mick Holder turns back the pages of the *Journal* to October 2015 and tales of life and death on Britain's railways

EIGHT HOURS DAY FOR RAILMEN

W Steele reports for the *Journal* from the 47th Trades Union Congress: 'Resolutions were carried dealing with the eight hours day for railwaymen, fair wage clauses, minimum wage question, increased cost of living, trade union officials and coroner's courts, and Board of Trade inquiries. On Friday we had fraternal greetings from James Ramsay MacDonald, who attended congress on behalf of the Labour Party. He received the ovation of the week, and confined himself to the problems facing the trade unions and the Labour Party after the war closes. I believe the reception afforded Mr MacDonald was due to the dastardly press attack made upon him by the editor of *John Bull*, and not due to the attitude or doctrine expounded by him in the war campaign. Frankly, as a first conference, it is a disappointing experience. Perhaps one expects so much. Certainly it fails to impress one as the parliament of labour should do.'

ASKED MUCH, PROMISED LITTLE

The editor adds: 'The Trade Union Congress of 1915 has come and gone. It was unique in many respects. For the first time in its history a cabinet minister, in the person of David Lloyd George, attended and addressed the delegates, and to some extent bluffed them, for while he asked much, he promised little; nothing, in fact, so far as is fair consideration of the workers' position after the war is concerned.'

THREE YEARS PENAL SERVITUDE

Commenting on the aftermath of the Quintinshill rail disaster, the editor writes: 'The sentences of three years penal servitude and 18 months imprisonment respectively on the two signalmen concerned in the terrible accident at Gretna have come as a surprise to many, for while the carelessness was very apparent, and the disaster an awful one, it was only a mistake caused by misunderstanding, after all. Fireman Hutchinson was very rightly discharged by the court, and we note in Colonel Druitt's report, which has since been issued, that he attaches no blame to Hutchinson for the accident, but says he should have seen the lever collar adjusted.'

ADY MARTIN SHINE ON YOU CRAZY DIAMOND

It is with great sadness that I inform you of the death of our great friend and colleague Ady Martin, a driver with Arriva Trains Wales, based at Chester, after a brave battle with cancer. He was 44. After graduating from Huddersfield University with a BA in English and Communication Arts, Ady signed up for a stint in Her Majesty's forces by way of the Army, where he was affectionately known as Norm. He served in the Intelligence Corps as a lance corporal for just over three years.

Ady then joined the railway at Chester in 1998, initially as a guard, becoming a driver in 2002. Ady was a real character with a brilliant, and very dry, sense of humour. He loved a good night out, or weekend away, sharing the odd shandy with his mates, but was best known for his great passion for (mainly) alternative music. He loved live music and was forever going to gigs, as enthusiastic whether he was seeing a band for the first or 101st time. Among his favourite bands were Killing Joke, Public Image Ltd, the Stranglers, New Order, the Fall, Magazine and Pink Floyd.

Ady was also a major bookworm and an avid film buff. He was, without doubt, our local culture vulture, and would happily chat away on the subject of music, books and films for hours to anyone. He often joked that, when he retired, he would buy the biggest sofa he could find as he would be spending most of his retirement 'horizontal' as he put it, watching DVDs, reading and listening to music.

Ady's passing, particularly at such a young age, is a massive loss to all who knew him, and the huge gathering at the service to celebrate his life shows the high esteem in which he was held by everyone. All our thoughts at this difficult time are with his



Ady was a big fan of Killing Joke (above) and Public Image

family, his daughter Kate and his mum and dad, Pete and Margaret. Shine On You Crazy Diamond and Rest in Peace, mate. And, if you are looking down Ady, one of your colleagues reckons you still owe him a pint. So think on!

Jez Cox, Chester

DAVID HEARN WEST COUNTRY ROOTS

David Hearn of Fratton depot was extremely proud of his West Country heritage. Hailing from an established Barnstaple railway family, Dave made his railway entry via the junior porter grade (all spit and polish).

He progressed via the footplate grades to a fireman's position at Exmouth Junction.

Upon the politically-inspired mass railway closures of the 1960s, tough decisions had to be made. Dave and his young family left his beloved Westo and, in 1962, joined Fratton as a driver.

Dave was held in high esteem by all ASLEF trade unionists; annual leave being the single allowance of a branch absence!

Those who worked with him knew it was a privilege.

Dave sought to bring togetherness to colleagues derived from a close trade union partnership.
John Glazebrook, Portsmouth & IOW

ANDY BRUCE TEACHER AND STUDENT

Andrew Thomas Bruce (5 January 1931 to 9 August 2015) joined the fledgling British Rail in 1946 as a cleaner out of Newcastle. He came from a long line of railwaymen, including his father and grandfather, and his big brother Ken. He later worked on the footplate as a fireman, and then as a passed fireman, waiting for a driver's position to become available. He often referred to this as dead men's shoes!

Andy was active in his trade union, and also involved in mutual improvement classes held with fellow union members. Helped by his training experience as a sergeant, and later warrant officer, in the Territorial Army 275 Railway Squadron, Andy started his railway teaching career at Heaton depot.

He moved south in 1970, taking first a job as an instructor at Ilford school, then as a traction inspector based at Peterborough. Moving permanently to Hatfield in 1972, Andy returned to Ilford, where his wife Lillian joined him on the admin side. He had a talent for teaching and training and, having progressed up the ranks at Ilford, was promoted to training manager at the BRB in Euston.

He took early retirement in 1984 after Lillian passed away. A complete change from railway life beckoned and Andy took a BA degree in European History, Politics and Philosophy. Andy always loved learning and was a firm believer in self-improvement, which he continued his whole life.

RAY (DUSTY) MILLER WHITE CLIFFS OF DOVER

A large gathering of retired drivers turned up at Charing crematorium on 17 August to pay their respects and say a final farewell to one of their own, Raymond Francis Miller, affectionately known as Dusty, who sadly passed away on 27 July aged 87. Ray was born in Dover and moved to Ashford after serving in the RAF. He spent the rest of his working life as a loyal ASLEF member. As a fitting tribute, at the end of the eulogy, a steam train was heard, followed by *The White Cliffs of Dover* sung by Vera Lynn.
Robert Kilkie



Dusty with general secretary Derek Fullick

BILL GRAVES SERVED ON COUNCIL WITH DISTINCTION

William (Bill) Graves, an ex-Barrow Road and Bath Road driver, and former Labour councillor, passed away on 30 July at Southmead Hospital after a short illness. He was 91. Bill was a Midlands man, starting his railway career at Barrow Road following his demob from the Royal Navy and the Home Front in World War Two. He was transferred to Bath Road in 1965 when Barrow Road closed.

Bill did not spend that much time as a driver at Barrow Road or Bath Road as he was elected to Bristol city council for the Labour Party in 1954. He served with distinction as a councillor, becoming leader of Avon County Council, and also having special responsibility for housing for many years. Bill was a lifelong socialist.

He appeared recently in a BBC2 documentary called *Britain's Greatest Generation* which featured Bill and other



Bill Graves: A lifelong socialist, man and boy

men and women who were born after the First World War, who grew up during the Great Depression, who fought in the Second World War, and who subsequently rebuilt this country with the introduction of the Welfare State.

Bill will be deeply missed by his family – Robert, Lisa and grandson Nick – friends and former workmates.

Bernard Kennedy, Bristol

GLYN JONES MEDIEVAL HISTORY AND ART EXPERT

(Harry) Glyn Jones, a train operator at Earls Court, and member of West Brompton branch, until he retired, passed away in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, King's Lynn, on 14 May after a short illness. Glyn joined London Underground as a direct recruit guard in 1978. He remained a guard when OPO was introduced on the District line and moved to

White City, where he remained until he qualified as a train operator and returned to Parsons Green.

In 1999 he won several prizes in the LU station gardens competition for his fine work on the Southfields platform garden. He was always recognisable as 'the man who did the knitting' which he did as a remedy for the arthritis in his hands and

fingers. He was also an expert in Medieval history, art and architecture on which he lectured in his spare time for the Workers' Educational Association. Following his retirement Glyn moved to Newton, near Wisbech, in Cambridgeshire, where he continued his craft and educational activities.

Glenn O'Brien, Poulton le Fylde, Lancashire

PHILIP WADE MESS ROOM BANTER

Philip Wade, my father, passed away suddenly, but peacefully, on 17 July at the age of 72. A career railwayman, he started as a van boy in the parcels office at Sheffield Midland at the age of 15, but a life on the footplate was where his heart lay. In pursuit of his dream, and after a short period in the telegraph office at Sheffield Victoria, he moved to Millhouses MPD to begin work as a cleaner at the age of 17, working through the grades as a passed cleaner, fireman, passed fireman, relief driver and, finally, driver. This progression saw him work entirely in the South Yorkshire area, moving from Millhouses to Grimesthorpe, then Rotherham, and finally Sheffield Midland, where he worked until retirement. As a proud driver, he valued the mess room banter and camaraderie and had hoped to achieve 50 years' service but, unfortunately, ill health, following a fatality, meant early retirement in 1999. He was well known for smoking his pipe and his ability to drink lots of tea, both of which he enjoyed in retirement. At the funeral, a large number



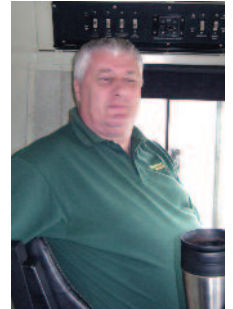
Philip pursued his dream of a life on the footplate

of his colleagues came to pay their last respects, and we, as a family, greatly appreciated that, as would have my dad. I now proudly carry on the family railway tradition, and my son is hoping to do the same in a few years' time.

Jason Wade, York

NIGEL LUNN MOVE IT ON OVER

It is with great sadness that I report the passing of our friend and colleague Nigel Lunn. Nigel was only 57 and had been suffering with pancreatic cancer. He had recently completed 40 years' service on the railway, working at a variety of depots on the former South Western division, and finishing his railway career working for Freightliner Heavy Haul at Eastleigh. Nigel had many interests away from the job including motorbikes, beer, walking and the high energy boogie blues of George Thorogood & the Destroyers. He made a valiant



Nigel Lunn loved George Thorogood

attempt to conquer Mount Kilimanjaro a few years ago and, although he didn't quite make it, he raised many hundreds of pounds for the Naomi House Hospice. A wake was held after a private funeral in Salisbury where we raised a glass to his memory. Our condolences and thoughts go to his wife and daughter at this difficult time.

Paul Barber, Eastleigh

FRED HAMILTON 10,000 VINYL ALBUMS

Fred Hamilton, who was born on 28 November 1944, died on 8 August. Originally from Liverpool, he saw the Beatles perform several times at the Cavern club.

Fred moved to London in the mid-1960s, embracing the happening alternative underground scene. He worked for Marconi avionics in quality control on detonators that ended up in the Polaris nuclear warhead where, he later drily suggested, there was a policy of failing the working detonators and passing the faulty ones.

I remember Fred saying, with a straight face, that it was not in the interests of humanity that these things should work and logical that his counterparts in the Soviet Union pursued the same policy! Between 1989 and 1998 Fred worked as a guard on the Northern line on London Underground; he quickly became a union activist, rarely missing branch meetings and taking part in numerous demos against Tory policies.

He enjoyed tying management up in knots in the form of regular letters of complaint. Fred was a great collector of books and records, and amassed more than 10,000 vinyl albums! His main passion in recent years was to visit live music pubs in London, filming the performers. Fred died doing two of the things he loved – drinking real ale and watching live music.

Martin Greig, Neasden



We welcome letters, either by email to journal@aslef.org.uk or by Royal Mail to **ASLEF Journal at 77 St John Street, London, EC1M 4NN**. Each month the writer of our **star letter** wins a rich range of ASLEF regalia.



Democracy, schemocracy!

So, under the Tories' new trade union bill, a vote for industrial action will require a 50% turnout of the membership? This from a government that got less than 25% of the national vote! Democracy for one but not the other!

Ministers were quick to condemn talk from some unions of breaking these draconian new laws; but I do not remember them criticising the fox hunting community for breaking laws that they don't like. Trade union levies to support the Labour Party are to be opt in, not opt out? Okay, fair enough, as long as company law is changed so any business that makes political contributions to the Conservative Party must ballot its shareholders first, instead of a hands up of whoever is at the AGM.

I look forward to the first ballot that conforms to the new laws and the deafening sound of goalposts being moved. Governments should be careful what they wish for...

JE Rimington, Maidstone, Kent

Part of the working week

I write in response to the letter from Bro Keith James in the August *Journal*. Whilst Keith is perfectly entitled to his opinion on Sunday as part of the working week, I feel he called into doubt the integrity of not only AAD, but my branch, and me, as I wrote the item which was adopted. This was placed before the branch last year, agreed unanimously and at this stage nobody outside the branch had any knowledge of it, let alone any influence on the agenda. It went to conference and was debated by the lay members of our trade union. As delegates we should go to AAD, say what we want, be willing to listen, and engage in free debate – there's no point having a conference where everyone agrees with each other. That's the way I have approached it on the two occasions I have been elected as a delegate. Unsurprisingly, I've found myself on the losing side of debate, and don't agree with every AAD decision. I spoke this year to strongly criticise a key decision at our 2013 AAD, and the way it has been pursued. So any suggestion of being meekly led by the 'hierarchy' and wanting 'more money from subs paying members' is frankly insulting.

I'll make no apology for wanting to create jobs, though the motivation is different.

MAEVE SAVED MY JOB – BUT BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU POST

In February I was unfortunate enough to fall foul of the bullying and harassment policy of London Underground over a post about a well-known hate preacher and offensive writing on his tee-shirt. The whole incident – from being interviewed at fact finding to being suspended to conclusion – took just over six months, and the stress was awful, not knowing if I would be dismissed. Dave Jones, my local rep at Upminster, advised me to contact Maeve Hanley who he described as the best rep to deal with my case. He was not wrong. I can't thank Maeve, and ASLEF, enough for everything



Tube rep Maeve Hanley at AAD in Edinburgh

they have done in the last six months. If it wasn't for Maeve I am afraid the outcome may have been very different. I am honoured to be a member of such a great union, and think Maeve should be given credit for representing the union in such a superb way. Thank you,

Maeve, for helping me keep my job! And, fellow ASLEF members, please be careful what you post on social media sites as it's not worth being put in such an awful position as I was.
Darren Powers, District line

Allowing others to enjoy the opportunity of relatively well paid employment, or creating opportunities for those threatened with redundancy, seems entirely appropriate to me; it's one of the many benefits. But, just to be clear, the item sets no new policy in terms of 'Sundays in'; it merely commits the EC to work for an existing policy; what point is there adopting a position if we don't pursue it?

It also recognises that this stance doesn't have universal support, and includes a commitment to engaging with the membership so that the benefits are better understood. I don't call that dictating.

So let's have that conversation, the circumstances may well vary by company or district. I'm in Edinburgh, I don't know much about what goes on in Bletchley. All I say is open your mind, be willing to listen, and let's avoid casting unfair innuendos around regarding the motivation behind decisions made in good faith.

Hussein Ezzedine, Edinburgh No 1

Amnesty – a moral choice

It is with great sadness, and a heavy heart, that I am going to cancel my membership to ASLEF. I removed myself from the political fund due to affiliation to Amnesty International and their stance on abortion. I have had 17 years' happy membership and enjoyed the union's support. I have been privileged to hold many branch positions, including secretary at Horsham and St Pancras International, AAD twice, local rep, h&s, and company council. I will, perhaps, be exposed in the workplace to management injustice and am acutely aware of the importance of ASLEF membership. But my moral compass is opposed to abortion. To remain would make me a hypocrite. My wish is that ASLEF would stand aside from the morals of the hierarchy of equality between mother and unborn child. This would enable the trade union to be fully inclusive. Should AAD

change its position next year on funding such campaigns I would be happy to re-apply for membership.

Matt Stanley, St Pancras International

Heartwarming messages

After recently returning to work following the unfortunate circumstance of being involved in a fatality, I would like to thank everyone from my current depot at Derby and my previous depot at Toton who gave their support and words of comfort whilst I was going through the after effects of this harrowing incident. It has been heartwarming to receive so many messages and visits from other drivers showing the thought ASLEF members give when any of us are in a bad place. My return to work would have taken a lot longer had I not had the backing and encouragement from everyone around me. I would also like to thank Martyn Fake, Nev Sloper and Eamonn Tague; you gave me the reassurance I needed.

Graham Garnett, CrossCountry

First past the winning post

I would like to correct Stan Godwin (*Journal*, August) regarding his comments that voters said no to PR in the 2011 referendum. The choice offered was between the current first past the post system and the alternative vote which uses second and third preferences until one candidate reaches 51%. Both retain 650 constituencies electing one MP without any proportionality; AV is a variant of FPTP.

Roger Sankey, Bournemouth

Be honest about mistakes

Interesting letters from Len Worboys and Bill Mackenzie (*Journal*, July). Unfortunately, full of straw man arguments and red herrings. The fact is there was an exodus from the metro depots to other companies in London. Everyone I asked had taken a cut in wages and had further to travel. The situation was that bad. It wasn't only drivers at London depots who wanted out: Freightliner HH opened a depot at Tonbridge, advertised for two drivers and there were more than 100 applicants from CSE! ASLEF, at its best, is unbeatable, but when it gets it wrong we've got to be honest about the mistakes made. Pretending everything's fine by rewriting history is not acceptable.

Laurie Holden, RMS

Off the rails or off his head

Since *Off the Rails* (*Journal*, August) focused on the royal family, I want to point out a few facts regarding our Queen and the cheap comment made by Tosh McDonald ('Good pay rise for the Queen, who does nowt!') The cost of the monarchy to the taxpayer rose by nearly 6% last year – more than double the rate of inflation –

but 56p per head of population is fantastic value for money and it's only republicans who cannot see this. As for Her Majesty doing 'nowt' she is now the longest reigning monarch in our history and one would like to think that at 89 she would take things easy. But she has increased her workload and left most of the younger royals trailing, especially the Duchess of Cambridge.

Paul Overington, Brighton

Long to reign over us

I am a supporter of the royal family and our constitutional monarchy. We can take comfort that the Queen denies a presidency to some delusional, claptrap Marxist, and I note that Elizabeth II marked the day (9 September) of the longest ever reign by our oldest ever monarch at the reopening of a railway.

Robert McMillan, Wolverhampton

Not going anywhere yet

May I thank all my friends and colleagues who have written, texted or phoned offering support in my battle against stomach cancer. I intend to fight this bugger with all the will and energy I have given to those I represented in ASLEF over the 62 years I have been a member, and that includes representation of a former GS and his family. I don't intend to be a shrinking violet, so if anyone bumps into me you won't have to tip-toe around, if you want to have a pint with me. I may not be recognisable after chemo because I shall lose my beard, something Vera has tried to get rid of for 50 years, but I think the solution is a touch over the top. Thanks again; I'm not going anywhere just yet.

Len Worboys, RMS

Working all night long

Not everyone out there is against the Tube strike; you have a lot of support. Working all night is not part of the current terms and conditions of London Underground workers – not just drivers – and the way changes to the running times of the Tube are being implemented is so wrong on so many levels.

Brenda Ormonde, by email

Strike a light at Matchfest

We were touched and delighted by donations and support from ASLEF branches, districts and members; you made the 2015 Matchwomen's festival not only possible, but successful, with your generosity. It was lovely to see ASLEF brothers and sisters there, for what I think was probably the best fest yet. Particular thanks to Chris Nutty, Nigel Gibson, District 5, and Bedford, Cambridge, Hitchin, Leeds, Motherwell, and Slade Green branches.

Louise Raw, organiser



BATTLE OF BRITAIN Mark Hardie of Ashford branch has produced two badges to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain in 1940. £5 + £1 p&p with proceeds to the Royal British Legion poppy appeal. Order via his PayPal account at mark121hardie@gmail.com using the friends and family option with your name, address and choice of ASLEF or Spitfire badge.



LONGSIGHT badges to mark 125th anniversary. £5 + £1 p&p. Also a bespoke tie at £8 + £1 p&p. Contact Jim

Hopkins on 07810 564804 or jimmyhopkins@hotmail.com for details.



BESPOKE CUSHIONS Hand made 40cm square cushions of railway engines and carriages.

£50. Call Abi on 07954 659849 or email me at adm.uk.me@btinternet.com



ASLEF-NUM 30th anniversary of the miners' strike. King's Cross twinned pits. Profits to Justice for Mineworkers. £5 + £1 p&p from richard.sullivan7@ntl.world.com



ISLE OF WIGHT 150th rail anniversary commemorative badge. £4.99 inc post and packaging.

Contact Fratton driver John Glazebrook on 07823 881495 for details.



PROFESSIONAL ENGRAVING at sensible prices. I can engrave anything you wish, such as the ASLEF logo on the pint tankard. Contact Paul Potts by email at ppotts1969@hotmail.co.uk



BANBURY badge, £5 plus p&p, proceeds to Katherine House Hospice for looking after Brother Chris Farmer during his final months. Contact Jim Browne on 07717 847057.



BLAND ENCOUNTER by Donald Wightman is a comedy novel about risqué encounters on the railways. A donation from the sale of each book will be made to the Royal British Legion and Help for Heroes. Paperback £7.99 ebook £3.95 from www.amazon.co.uk



COWDEN CRASH commemorative badges, price £5, to mark the 20th anniversary of the

accident. Contact Mick Green at userg4163@aol.com if you are ex-Norwood train crew.



HAMPTON to mark 150 years of the railway coming to Hampton. £5 plus £3 p&p. Cheques, made

payable to Network South East Railway Society, to 100 Whitley Road, Eastbourne, BN22 8ND.

To advertise please phone 020 7324 2400 or send an email to journal@aslef.org.uk

Appalled how Terry was treated by Virgin sneak

I read with interest the article in the *Journal* by Terry Tuite. I am appalled at the way he has been treated and accused on the hearsay of a director from another company. All Terry was doing was assisting a colleague, the company he works for, and all the paying passengers. The new broom type is much too common these days and, in my experience, having worked for a few TOCs in my time, seems to be the trend when – and excuse the term – whippersnappers who have been on the railway for next to no time try to make a name for themselves by reporting inaccuracies. Drivers, ASLEF members, are being targeted. I suppose there are quite a few points for reporting a driver as we are famous for having very good union backing. They're trying to catch us out to look good.

Terry is correct, this draconian approach needs to stop. If a driver breaches the rules and regulations or commits a reportable error or offence then, yes, it may be warranted. But, unfortunately, in this day and age, some people are looking for any (in their opinion) errors to jump on us. I have worked for Chiltern and Terry is correct about their policy towards the driving grade, although this has deteriorated since Adrian Shooter, a real railwayman, who personally introduced every worker to the company, left. But tarring all managers with the same brush is wrong as there are still many DTM's from the old school who understand the job inside out and know if a driver has made an error that needs discipline or just a word in the ear.

There is also the issue of Facebook and Twitter as companies monitor tweets and social media and I have seen drivers hauled into the office and accused of wrongdoings on Twitter when, in fact, nothing has been done against any rules or regulations or company procedures. It's time we were considered innocent until proven guilty, not held to be guilty until we can prove we are innocent. I hope this incident with Terry, and any others due to inaccurate, untruthful and malicious reporting, is taken seriously and ASLEF will support us if any other driver has the unfortunate experience Terry had.

Tony Stickells, Chester

Underhand tactics

It make me chuckle reading Terry Tuite's article – *My Dog Drove the Train with Me in the Second Man's Seat*. I see that spying on drivers is still alive and kicking on the modern railway. But even under British Rail you had to be very careful of the underhand tactics employed by some traction inspectors. In the 1980s, when I



got my driver's position on Merseyrail, the chief traction inspector for Liverpool would travel in the rear cab of the 507/508 watching the speedo between Ormskirk and Liverpool Central and you wouldn't know he was there. So be careful, especially these days, with different companies and not knowing who is who.

Gordon Young, RMS

Executive liar after blood

Like Terry Tuite I, too, had a run-in with a Tube Lines executive after my blood after I took a shortcut over live track at Ruislip depot. It was a sod's law encounter as I normally cycled to the sidings, taking my folding bike on my loco. He enquired if it was normal practice to do what I just did and I told him that as I was licensed to be on live track I sometimes did so to keep in practice. On returning from stabling at Edgware my manager informed me the man had accused me of swearing at him. I wouldn't have told him I was a Tube Lines driver if I had, would I? Some weeks later he dropped his complaint, realising he was caught in a lie.

Dennis Bostock, Clacton-on-Sea

Lack of forward thinking

I read with dismay Simon Weller's feature (*Journal*, August) about the situation at DB Schenker, and the possible redundancies in our grade. Here we go again! Whilst DBS cannot be held responsible for the duty levied on coal, I find their lack of forward thinking inexcusable. Only a few months back, adverts were placed in many rail-related publications, seeking applications from qualified train drivers to fill vacancies at various locations throughout the country. This new levy on coal hasn't been implemented with just a few weeks' notice; unfair as it is, it was widely known that it would be introduced in April, so how short sighted was it of DBS management to still spend money they hadn't really got placing adverts for drivers who now face the possibility of losing their jobs? Having been

Terry Tuite, a driver with Chiltern Railways, who works out of Banbury depot, offered a cautionary tale (*Journal*, August) about what went wrong when he did his company, colleagues and passengers a good turn and there was a troublemaking Virgin Trains director on board

made redundant four years ago (by DBS) I know only too well how our colleagues must be feeling right now, with the uncertainty and worry that this situation has caused.

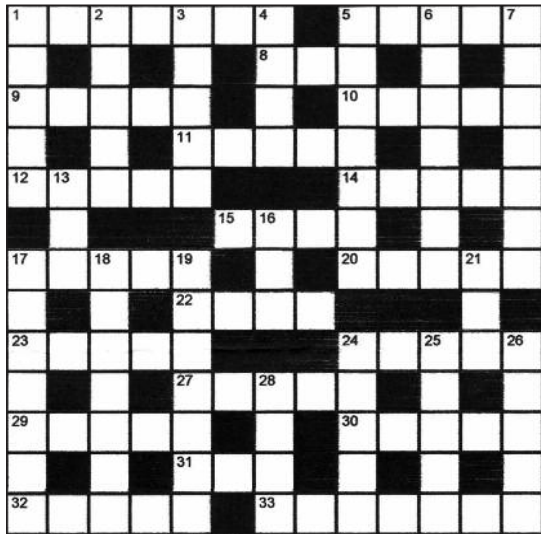
I have worked for freight companies in the past and it is a very competitive and volatile sector. It's all contracts and grovelling and companies such as shipping, logistics, retailers, energy suppliers, etc, can dictate to rail operators what they want, and what they want to pay. Do you really think they are the slightest bit bothered about the consequences to a FOC should a contract be awarded to another company? Indeed, one FOC I worked for lost a major contract from a shipping company because another FOC undercut the price by a few hundred pounds. I kid you not! Luckily, there were no drivers displaced that time but, in the present climate, it doesn't work like that anymore. Companies now are very reluctant to carry drivers.

I hope there is a positive outcome for all our drivers concerned with this latest hammer blow to our grade; they all have an uncertain future at this moment in time but, like all of us, still have to come to work regardless, even with a dark cloud hanging over them. This shows the professionalism and dedication that our grade is renowned for.

The last paragraph in the feature by Chiltern driver Terry Tuite rings really true with me. My father and brothers were, or are, in the aviation industry as pilots or air traffic controllers. I chose to become a train driver, like Terry, because I, too, like driving trains, and take pride in what I do. So I hope it all works out for you DBS drivers who are facing an uncertain future. I am sure our union will fight this tooth and nail for a positive outcome.

Andy Czerniakiewicz, driver, Arriva Trains Wales, Crewe

Prize Crossword number 114 by Zebedee



Solution to Prize Crossword number 113 which appeared in the September edition of the *ASLEF Journal*

Across: 1 Series 7 Crotchet 8 Zinc 10 Game 11 Sherry 12 Essen 14 Nostril 17 Journal 18 Welsh 21 Galaxy 23 USSR 25 Mars 26 Dateline 27 Pewter

Down: 1 Sizzle 2 Rung 3 Screw 4 Potshot 5 Acre 6 Near miss 9 Career 13 Stowaway 15 Theism 16 Katydid 19 Hussar 20 Julep 22 Amen 24 Raft

Congratulations to **Neil Leach** of **Brislington, Bristol**, who was last month's winner.

Across

- 1 Basically, one fourth (7)
 5 Candle (5)
 8 Fodder (3)
 9 Senior (5)
 10 Keyboard instrument (5)
 11 ----- for the Sky, film (5)
 12 Unpleasant (5)
 14 Speak publicly (5)
 15 Sainthood glow (4)
 17 Sting (5)
 20 Destitute (5)
 22 Detest (4)
 23 Preside over (5)
 24 Putting surface (5)
 27 Bury (5)
 29 Short (5)
 30 Edible bulb (5)

31 Levy (3)

- 32 Tuna fish (5)
 33 Tree-shaping (7)

Down

- 1 Dancing ----- Hit Abba song (5)
 2 South American mountains (5)
 3 TV sitcom, ----- and June (5)
 4 The South American ostrich (4)
 5 Tropical storm (7)
 6 Appease (7)
 7 Penguins' breeding place (7)
 13 Objective (3)
 16 Decree (3)

- 17 Medieval trombone (7)
 18 Peninsula between Egypt and Iran (7)
 19 Economical (7)
 21 Colourant (3)
 24 Bunch (5)
 25 Heather genus (5)
 26 City in north-east France (5)
 28 Writing (4)



The winner of this month's crossword will receive Marks & Spencer vouchers to the value of £25

MARKS & SPENCER

Name.....
 Address.....

Postcode.....

Thanks for all your responses to the 113th ASLEF crossword in the September edition. If you successfully complete this month's crossword please send the solution to the Editor, *ASLEF Journal*, 77 St John Street, London, EC1M 4NN by 14 October

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